

# Do Liberals Want Curbside Pickup More than Conservatives? Contactless Shopping as a Protective Behavior during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Research Objective

To develop and test a research model to explain consumer's intention to increase contactless shopping as a way to protect themselves and others in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Theoretical Background

### Politicalization and Polarization of COVID-19

- **Republicans** and **Democrats** have exhibited a contrasting stance toward the pandemic. Republicans including President Trump have continuously downplayed the severity of the virus, whereas Democrats have exhibited greater concern toward its dangers (Gittleson, 2020; Tyson, 2020).
- Studies show that conservatives are less likely to be informed about COVID-19, believe the media's coverage of the pandemic to be accurate, and thus show lower risk perceptions of COVID-19 than liberals and moderates (Calvillo et al., 2020; Rothgerber et al., 2020).

### Protection Motivation Theory (PMT)

- PMT is one of the most frequently utilized theoretical models that explains how individuals adopt protectionary measures in case of a threatening event (Maddux & Rogers, 1983).
- PMT suggests that an individual's coping response or their protection motivation results from the combined evaluation of **threat** appraisal and **coping** appraisal.

### Contactless Shopping

- Includes zero-contact shopping (e.g., online and mobile shopping in which consumers shop from their own home and get the purchased products delivered to their doorstep) and minimal contact shopping (e.g., buy online pickup in store (BOPIS), contactless payment).
- Consumers are rapidly adopting contactless shopping during the pandemic as a way to protect themselves from the virus.

## Method

- Data were collected using market research panels from Qualtrics Research Services. A stratified sampling method was used to ensure even representation of age and gender groups.
- **311 responses collected from May 28th, 2020 to June 5th, 2020.**
- All PMT variables—perceived severity, perceived vulnerability, response efficacy, self-efficacy, behavioral intention—were measured by items previously validated (Teasdale et al., 2011).
- One's intention to increase contactless shopping services in the near future were measured by three items developed by the authors (e.g., curbside pickup, delivery services, self-checkout services).
- Data analyzed via SEM.

## Discussion & Implications

- Political orientation had a significant effect on perceived severity (H1a), vulnerability (H1b), and response efficacy (H1c), but not on self-efficacy (H1d).
- Among the threat appraisals, perceived vulnerability (H2a) positively influenced stay-at-home intention while perceived severity (H2b) did not.
- Both response efficacy (H3a) and self-efficacy (H3b) positively influenced stay-at-home intention.
- The increase in consumers' intentions to engage in contactless shopping was positively impacted by stay-at-home intentions (H4).
- Our findings suggest that, in order to encourage social distancing behaviors and mitigate the spread of the virus, a clear and bipartisan response from the political leaders and unbiased media coverage are imperative.

## Conceptual Framework / Results

